Surára
Pakidái
Shiriana
Waica

/4 cont./

648 agencies, so to speak, in the primeval forest. It is also one of the duties of the personnel, however, to lay out plantations for their own living, where they grow manioc, maize, sweet potatoes, bananas, mamão /papaya/, beans, tobacco, sugar cane, etc. In addition, they hunt and fish.

Since living conditions are more favorable on the Aracá and the work of the piaçabeiros (palm-fiber gatherers) is more remunerative than that of the rubber gatherers, the population here is four times as large as on the Demini. The region of the Indians begins at the Cachoeira dos Indios (Ills. 2 and 3). There is not as yet, however, any Indian protection post on the Rio Aracá.

/5/

114 III. The Ethnic Affiliation of the Surára and Pakidái

As early as the beginning of the previous century important investigators, among them Alexander von Humboldt, Robert Schomburgk, Jean Chaffanjon, and Theodor Koch-Grünberg, undertook ethnographic and in part linguistic studies in the northern and western part of the area between Rio Branco, Uraricuera, Serra Parima, and Rio Negro among a few groups of the Xiriána /Shiriana/ (5b) and Waiká /Waica/, which were broadened and

[104] 5b. X is pronounced like sch /in German/.

deepened by Otto Zerries and Meinhard Schuster in 1954/55, especially with regard to the Waiká (6a) (Waika) in the catchment

• [194] 6a. When the Surára and Pakidái pronounce the tribal name of the Waiká, their worst enemies, they always accent the final a.

[197] area of the upper Orinoco (6b). Their work was supported by North

6b. Zerries, 1956a.

American missionaries who have been in touch with the

/135 cont./

however, Čiriana and Čapakura are still to be regarded as two independent linguistic groups.

In the following, only a small selection of Surára words are offered, along with the corresponding words of Waika (according to Schuster) (16), Karimé (according to Salathé, 1932),

(122)

16. My sincerest thanks are due Herr Dr. Meinhard Schuster, Frankfurt, for the willingness with which he put at my disposal an excerpt of the Waika linguistic material that he is working on.

Širianá (according to Koch-Grünberg, 1928), and Warema (according to Vinci, 1956), in order to illustrate the close relationship that exists between these languages. The chief criterion for the selection was the availability of documented forms in the five languages; moreover, care was also taken to draw on words of a "non-cultural" nature for the most part, that is, /136/ those that are not so frequently taken over by neighboring languages and thus -- if agreeing morphologically and in meaning -- represent stronger proof of the genetic relationship of the languages compared. Becher's linguistic notes were made chiefly with Surára informants; for the designations of body parts, however, there were also additional forms (marked by P) which a Pakidái informant gave him.

The transcription of the five lists has been standardized; that of Karimé has also been simplified somewhat by the fact that two h and š sounds not adequately described by Salathé have been reproduced simply as h and š. With respect to the transcription, the following should be noted: ə̄ = middle, back (or central), unrounded vowel; ɨ̄ = high, back (or central), unrounded vowel; ã, etc. = nasal vowel; ɛ = open e; š = unvoiced, alveopalatal fricative; x = unvoiced, palatal fricative; ? = glottal stop; : = length for the previous sound.

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

thing they could ever have imagined. It was the first time a stranger had learned to articulate the explosive vocables of their savage, noisy tribe.

Unlike Makiritari and Pemonton, languages of Carib origin with very frequent aspirates, the Shirian tongue is chanted rather than spoken and possesses few aspirates. In all probability it is close to the fountain-head of all language—that is, a common-sense arrangement of sounds and chants—and it is more adapted to forest conditions, being 'howled', with the accent on the last syllable of the word, so that the sound echoes over a considerable distance.

The language is richer than might be supposed from the backwardness of the Indians who speak it. Later on, with Luis Antonio's help, I was able to complete a vocabulary of more than eight hundred words. The most surprising feature is that many of the words have an undeniable affinity with the Malayan language. One example is '*naes*', the word (indifferently prefixed or suffixed) by which the Shirian refers to a man as such, differentiated from other forms of life or other things, and therefore implying a certain superiority, as in 'sir'. This is its exact equivalent in Malayan. Another example is '*pulipuli*' (moon), which is too close to the Malayan '*puleng*' for the similarity to be accidental. And so on.

I profited from my stay with the Shirians by analysing some of their mental processes, their psychical reflexes and their reactions to conditioned phenomena such as come under the general heading of 'psychotechnics'. I had with me a few sheets of cardboard from the wrappings of my medical supplies, and a stub of pencil (lost for some time, this turned up in the possession of a good lady who was using it—with results that were hard to discern—as a cosmetic). I would write a word in very clear block letters, or I would draw a face, on one side of the sheet. Then I would give the pencil to a Samatari who had been following my actions with the closest interest and ask him to copy exactly what I had written or drawn.

I repeated this test several times, and some curious results were produced. They may contribute something of value towards the analysis of primitive mentalities, and I reproduce them opposite.

With this test, even at a first glance, we can make some contribution towards a definition of the Indians' mental processes, which are still at the stage where their intelligence is wholly analytical. They have not yet developed the power of synthesis, which comes later. This is clearly shown by the Shirian copies of the face. They render all the details, without, however, being able to unite them

9:Greller K-5 (1951) 1957 SQ18 Yanoama SQ 18
Guaharibo

123
than a few inches across. All had their ears pierced by sticks [301]
slightly thicker and longer than a cigarette. Their paddles [501]
were short and as crudely constructed as the boat itself, some being roughly rounded and others no more than discs lashed with lianas to a pole handle.

To these primitives we must have appeared a strange collection. Who are these beings—they must have asked themselves—who go about dressed, shod and bearded, and who point queer things at us which go "click"? And the many boats lined up there, that go so fast and make much noise! Mopare had probably told them wonderful tales, but since he had left the camp when it was still in embryo, he was doubtless as much amazed by its present size as the others. There was a moment of hesitancy and then Butrón held out a machete and said: "*Shori! Shori! Noji!*" He told us this meant "friend" or "relative". In exchange for the machete, he demanded the man's bow and arrows. The size of the bow surprised me, since it was taller than the man himself. One by one the Indians disembarked and surrendered their arms in exchange for machetes. All except a fine, well-built brave who seemed to be their leader and who remained sitting in the stern of the boat, watchful and silent. The women, still cowering, stayed near him. At last, seeing his companions on shore and our attitude giving no cause for mistrust, he was reassured. Courteously and with dignity he held out a hand to the women, who were still apprehensive.

"Padamo?" we asked him.

"Padamu, Padamu," he replied.

The final vowel, nasal and strongly accentuated, lies between [194]
"o" and "ou". The word is indigenous and has been the river's official nomenclature since the time of Diez de la Fuente.

"Guaharibo?"

Another nasal sound which cannot be transcribed followed. It was a sort of grunt and could have meant "Yes". And then: "Guaharibo".

"Waika?"

A worried look, followed by the gesture of bending a bow. [648]
"Waika—pfft! Waika—pfft!"

CHAPTER I

YĄNOMAMÖ CULTURE AND EARLIER ANTHROPOLOGICAL WORK[1]

101

A. Yąnomamö Culture

The Yąnomamö are discussed in the literature under such tribal designations as Guaica, Waika, Guaharibo, Maku, Schiriana, Xiriana, Kirischana, Shidishana, Shamatari, Sanema, and Yanoama. Most of the terms are derogatory names applied to the Yąnomamö by their neighbors and charapterize the people as being monkey-like or as savages.[2]

[114] In the upper Orinoco and the Mavaca basin where I conducted my field work, the Indians referred to themselves as Yąnomamö, which at once defines their mode of life, language, origin, and includes all people who share this mode of life, language and origin. All non-Yąnomamö are collectively

---

[114] [1]As there are very few reliable English sources describing Yąnomamö social organization and culture, I give a brief description of them here. The best source in English to date is Zerries' 1955 publication, but it deals only with particular traits of Yąnomamö culture.

[128] [194] [104] [2]The word Yąnomamö is nasalized on every syllable, but for ease of typing this manuscript, I have not indicated all the nasalization. The vowel /-ą-/ is written /-ą-/. I have written the /- ə -/ as "-ë-" and have indicated nasalization by /-,-/; whenever a Yąnomamö word has one nasalized syllable, all syllables in that word are nasalized.

called nabä--"stranger" or "foreigners." Nabä have degenerated from an original Yąnomamö stock and are regarded, therefore, with some contempt by the Yąnomamö, an attitude that is further manifested in the language; Yąnomamö in linguistic usage requires an honorific pronoun whereas nabä takes the common pronouns.

I adopt the term Yąnomamö to refer to the entire group whose geographical distribution is shown in Map A,[1] using the term in a linguistic-cultural sense to define the tribe. Others have adopted the same usage with minor differences in spelling.

Several of the above-mentioned terms, Sanema, Waika, and Shamatari deserve further discussion, as they are used either as self-designations or in reference to local groups of Yąnomamö occupying specific geographical areas.

The term Sanema (Wilbert, 1963) is used in the upper Caura River as a self-designation. In this dialect the initial phone /y/ has been replaced throughout the language by /s/, Sanema thus being a local pronunciation of Yąnomamö.[2]

The term Shamatari is used by all the Yąnomamö Indians on the upper Orinoco River to refer to the congeries of villages that occupy the large area south of the Orinoco River and adjacent portions of Brazil. Zerries (1964:19)

---

[1] See next page.

[2] Ernesto Migliazza, personal communication. According to Migliazza, the word Sanema is pronounced /Sanöma/.

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 29]

1

Doing Fieldwork among the Yąnomamö

THE YĄNOMAMÖ[1] INDIANS live in southern Venezuela and the adjacent portions of northern Brazil (see frontispiece map, p. iv). Some 125 widely scattered villages have populations ranging from 40 to 250 inhabitants, with 75 to 80 people the most usual number. In total numbers their population probably approaches 10,000 people, but this is merely a guess. Many of the villages have not yet been contacted by outsiders, and nobody knows for sure exactly how many uncontacted villages there are, or how many people live in them. By comparison to African or Melanesian tribes, the Yąnomamö population is small. Still, they are one of the largest unacculturated tribes left in all of South America.

But they have a significance apart from tribal size and cultural purity: the Yąnomamö are still actively conducting warfare. It is in the nature of man to fight, according to one of their myths, because the blood of "Moon" spilled on this layer of the cosmos, causing men to become fierce. I describe the Yąnomamö as "the fierce people" because that is the most accurate single phrase that describes them. That is how they conceive themselves to be, and that is how they would like others to think of them.

I spent nineteen months with the Yąnomamö,[2] during which time I acquired some proficiency in their language and, up to a point, submerged myself in their culture and way of life.

[1]The word Yąnomamö is nasalized through its entire length, indicated by the diacritical mark [ą]. When this mark appears on a word, the entire word is nasalized. The terminal vowel [-ö] represents a sound that does not occur in the English language. It corresponds to the phone [ö] of linguistic orthography. In normal conversation, Yąnomamö is pronounced like "Yah-no-mama," except that it is nasalized. Finally, the words having the [-ä] vowel are pronounced at that vowel with the "uh" sound of "duck." Thus, the name Kąobawä would be pronounced "cow-ba-wuh," again nasalized.

[2]I spent a total of twenty-three months in South America of which nineteen were spent among the Yąnomamö on three separate field trips. The first trip, November 1964 through February 1966, was to Venezuela. During this time I spent thirteen months in direct contact with the Yąnomamö, using my periodic trips back to Caracas to visit my family and to collate the genealogical data I had collected up to that point. On my second trip, January through March 1967, I spent two months among Brazilian Yąnomamö and one more month with the Venezuelan Yąnomamö. Finally, I returned to Venezuela for three more months among the Yąnomamö, January through April 1968.